

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace the paragraph beginning with “Control is passed to...” with the following paragraph:

[page 16, line 11—page 17, line 4] Control is passed to decision step 610 from the step 605 wherein the CPU 201 operates to compare the node signature in the received message with the node signatures for the same node identifier stored in the receiving node. If it is detected that the node signature in the received message is different from node signatures already stored for this assigned node identifier in decision step 610, step 635 is entered in which one of the detected nodes is selected for further network participation. The node signatures ~~have~~ may have numerical values and the node having the node signature with the lowest arithmetic numeric value is selected. Alternatively, the highest arithmetic numeric value may be selected or an ordered list of the numeric values of the node signatures may be generated and the node having a predetermined place in the ordered list may be selected. After the selection in the step 635, the other nodes detected as having the same node identifier but different node signatures are processed to assure that only one node operates with the assigned node identity.